

NhEW (NorthousEastWest) a collaboration by OPENOFFICE and cOPENhagenOFFICE

December 7, 2000 6:00 pm-8:00 pm
Storefront for Art and Architecture
97 Kenmare Street

OPENOFFICE and cOPENhagenOFFICE will present their dwelling prototype 'NhEW' this Thursday: a project dealing with architectural space tailored as an item of clothing - the space encountered between the kayak and the Internet. The installation will be accompanied by a sound piece composed for the NhEW experience, accumulating sounds from NhEW's various visited sites.

This full scale prototype is a unit adapted to the needs of the individual - made of lightweight space-age materials for easy transportation, assembly and disassembly. Compact and comfortable, NhEW offers a wide range of possible materials, for different looks, climates and functions. The user specifies the individual needs and desires the structure is to satisfy. The NhEW unit is customized and can be ordered through the Internet at www.nhew.net.

NhEW materials range between packaging, aircraft construction, cabinetry, and apparel- each tool for living, moving, and storing is adopted as a second 'skin' in this living environment, where clothing becomes storage, storage crates become beds, backpacks become furniture, and packing material becomes cushions and insulation. Elements carried with NhEW are recycled as functional everyday objects to minimize what you take with you.

First exhibited at Gammel Dok in Copenhagen, it was constructed outdoors in January 2000 on a beach site in Ishøj. After its temporary habitation in Storefront, NhEW will continue on to Nuuk, Greenland, where it will be tested against the challenging elements of its inception.

contact Sarah Herda at Storefront for Art and Architecture at 212-431-5795
for further information about the exhibition.

Video: Interview with carpenter Emil Rasmussen. Summer 1999. (12 min.)

Emil Rasmussen (1906) was as a young man working with Knud Rasmussen in Thule, Northern Greenland as a carpenter. During the period 1928-1930 he lived and built many of the buildings, which became the foundation of the trading station established by Knud Rasmussen in 1909.

Emil Rasmussen went back to Denmark. Knud Rasmussen had come up with the idea of making a transportable hut for the nomadic Inuit population in Thule contacted him in 1930. He was asked to develop the first prototype for a standard mobile dwelling unit for the Inuit population of the Thule region.

The project became a one-room dwelling unit that could be transported by dogsled out into the landscape or onto the inland ice. Emil Rasmussen constructed a small-prefabricated wooden hut that could be dismantled into 24 panels, where the roof could be lifted off and the sky enjoyed. Knud Rasmussen was very pleased with the prototype and resolved to put a full-scale rendition of the hut to test in Thule. The prototype came to Thule with the 7th Thule Expedition in 1932-33 where Emil Rasmussen also participated.

Unfortunately Knud Rasmussen died during this Expedition and the project was never implemented and the idea was never followed up.

The hut measures approximately 3x3 meters and exists of 24 panels measuring 60x180cm. The panels are constructed as a standard sandwich element with a thin layer of insulation inside. The panels are put together on a level ground and the roof is erected as a pitched roof 45-degree angle. Each panel has a water level build in to sure the horizontal positioning of each panel. The roof panels pivot, open up or can be completely removed.

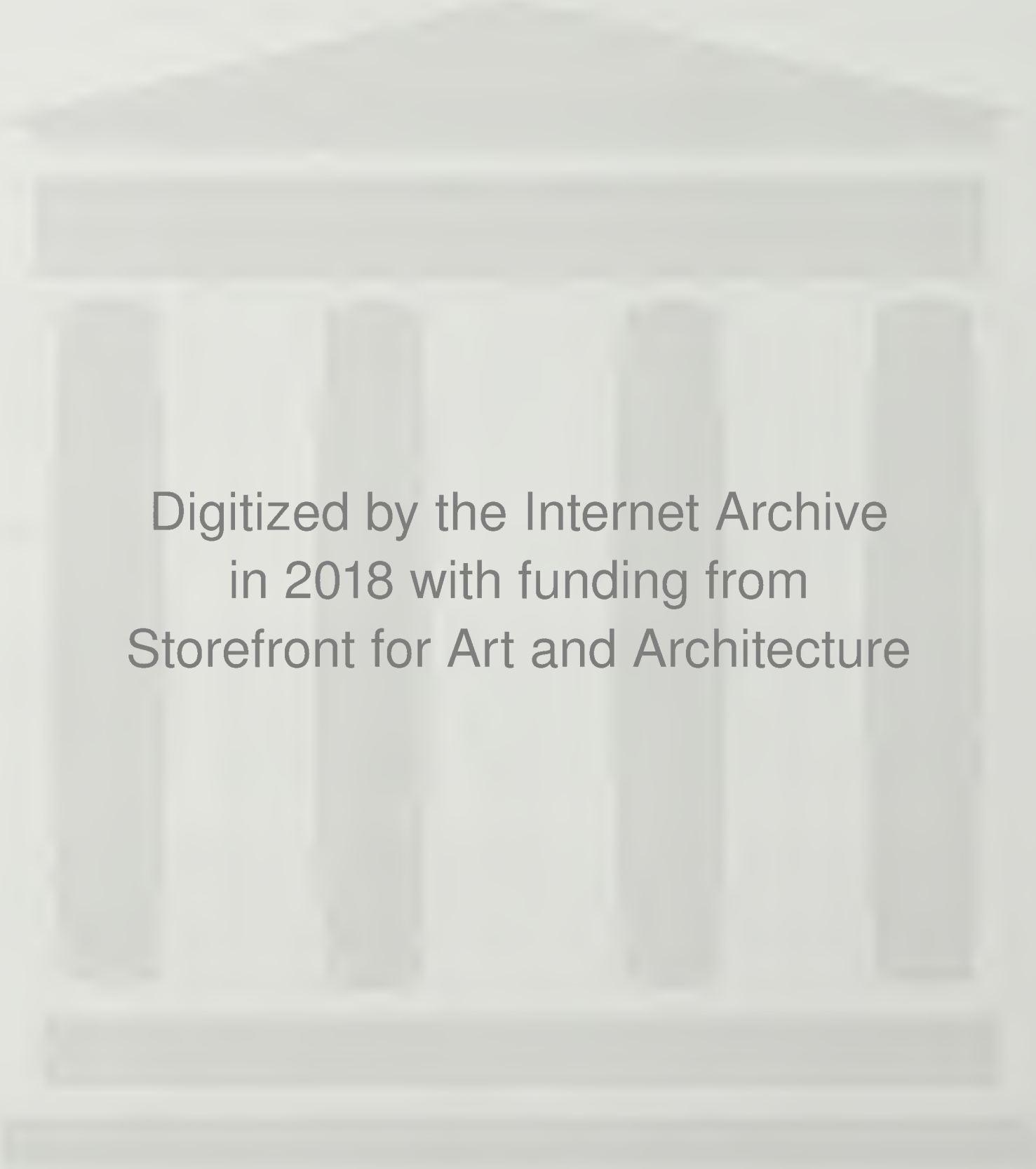
It was vital for the Inuit population that they could change their dwelling from winter to summer. Even though the degrees during summer never becomes much above 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the need for opening up the dwelling was much needed. The traditional dwelling was cramped and claustrophobic. In summer many families tented outside. Now it was possible to remove the roof and enjoy the changing conditions during the summer.

During winter the Intuits wrapped their houses in either blocks of snow or turf.

All families at that time, like many today, were living off hunting. It was necessary to move according to the migration of the animals. So the population was what one could call local nomads, moving most commonly between a winter- and a summer residence.

The Inuit usually lived in tents during the summer or in one of the permanent hunter huts placed around the region at strategic fortunate hunting environments. Now the population would be able to disassemble their house and bring it with them where ever the animals migrated.

The NhEW project is partly based on material from this research.



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NhEW (NorthousEastWest)

A project by OpenOffice, NY and cOPENhagenOFFICE/Tanja Jordan
December 7, 2000 – January 21, 2001

Inspired by research made in Northern Greenland, NhEW is a portable dwelling unit that responds to the needs of the modern nomad, from the contemporary Inuit to the extreme tourist. NhEW units can be adapted to the requirements of the individual, and customized from a wide range of lightweight materials for easy assembly, disassembly and transport. NhEW's components double as functional objects to maximize the user's nomadic potential: clothing becomes storage; storage crates become beds; backpacks become furniture; and packing material becomes insulation. The result is a cross between a tent, an anorak, and a camper that could conceivably serve as a portable home, hunter's tent, greenhouse or temporary roof apartment. Units can be ordered online at www.nhew.net for delivery by sled, ship, car, plane, train or helicopter. A full-scale NhEW dwelling prototype will be installed at Storefront.

NhEW was first exhibited at The Danish Architecture Center—Gammel Dok in Copenhagen. A catalog documenting the project was published by the Center as Volume 13 of the Arkitekturgalleriet series, and will be available for sale at Storefront.

In spring 2001, a NhEW prototype will be tested in the severe climate of Nuuk, Greenland, the landscape that informed its development.

The Project

NhEW is a cultivation and investigation of space as a bodily extension; an investigation of the body's close sheathe of space. Space that migrates, space that transforms - the space between the kayak and the Internet.

Extreme experiences challenge our perception of pain and pleasure, our notion of comfort and habitation, and the applied materials are thus challenged anew. The state of discomfort juxtaposed the notion of comfort rouses our senses. Discomfort is an alert, vigilant state. Comfort is, on the other hand, an undifferentiated state of triviality where the absence of stimuli engenders a numbness to the surroundings.

The exhibition contains a physical 1:1 spatial entity, which one can occupy and don.

The spatial entity deals with the concept of space as a garment, a space specifically cut to the needs of the individual, a space allowing room for movement.

During winter appearing as a closed shell, while in summer it can be folded open drawing in the landscape. The roof can be removed. The house lives via its use and breathes with the seasons.

NhEW

A dwelling prototype combining economy with comfort. A unit adapted to the needs of the individual - made of light-weight space-age materials for easy transportation, assembly and disassembly. Compact and comfortable. NhEW offers a wide range of possible materials, for different looks, climates and functions. The user specifies individual needs and desires that the structure is to satisfy.

The unit can be transported by sled, ship, car, plane, train or helicopter, or one can, when ordering, have it forwarded to one's future vacation destination. The result is a cross between a tent, an anorak, a camper and a personal space or interior. Conceivably serving as an holiday option, a specifically designed space, an house addition, a guest house, a hunter's tent, a greenhouse or a temporary roof apartment.

The unit is built up of panels measuring 60 x 120 cm, attached to a hinged framework of aluminum profiles. A plywood crate, lined with insulating Foam-Core, functions as a structural element, serving both

as moving box and as a bed-platform with an insulated storage space beneath. The honeycomb panels (of either paper or aluminum) are surfaced with various laminates. A softer inner lining is fixed to the primary panel structure with Velcro attachments, for increased comfort and functionality

The honeycomb panels are dual-function, simultaneously lightweight, structural and insulating. The panels function as fixed partitions, openings, doors, windows, benches or tables, all according to individual needs.

The Internet Landscape

The NhEW web site includes an Internet mail-order catalog, comparable to www.amazon.com, www.beetle.com or www.realdoll.com. Here one can find a layout for the construction of a space of one's own, through the use of different materials.

The layout of the house, unfolded in plan, is a grid-game, where one selects the rectangular panels of one's choice, from an untold number of feasible variations, according to the available materials and panel arrangements on hand. Upon doing so the material and color scheme can be seen on screened by merely clicking 3-D, or the model can be printed out as a do-it yourself kit. When making a credit card purchase one can have the unit delivered to one's destination of choice.

The procedure is as follows:

Select:

- One of 3 layouts, a vertical space, a horizontal space and a tube-like space.

- Materials:

Hard exterior shell: wood, aluminum, Formica.

Soft interior cladding: felt, sealskin, foam egg-crate packing material.

- Special extras can be purchased at extra cost:

Skylights, storage bags, grass mats, flexible inner lining.

Upon completing a design selection, one can choose to publish it on the web site "Gallery," exhibiting one's design as an example of the endless possibilities of the NhEW system.

As a supplement to the Gallery one can access an on-line forum to chat or comment on the notions of comfort, travel and the NhEW system. All comments are accessible to others visiting the web site, allowing for possible response and on-line dialogue.

NhEW (NorthhouseEastWest) is a project dealing with architectural space tailored as an item of clothing - the space encountered between the kayak and the Internet.

NhEW proposes a new type of living space incorporating aspects of materiality and mobility inspired by research made in Northern Greenland, more specifically the near proximities of The Thule Air Base, where Inuit cultures have traditionally lived nomadically.

"One should not reside in houses that are all too old. Even without the event of death, people ought to abandon a house before it becomes too old, as there can be much illness affiliated with an old house."
(from 500 maxims, ancient sayings and augers from Western Greenland. Knud Rasmussen.)

NhEW starts with the extreme landscape in the Thule region as its point of departure; through a reformulation of conventional dwelling habits, and exposure to hybrid cultural outlooks NhEW prompts a critical outlook on the functionality & furnishing of everyday life.

NhEW Concept

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The unit can be transported by sled, ship, car, plane, train or helicopter, or can during ordering be forwarded to one's future destination. The result is a cross between a anorak and a cabin conceivably serving as a holiday option, or a house addition, a guesthouse, a hunter's tent, a greenhouse or a temporary roof apartment.

NhEW is a cultivation and investigation of space as a bodily extension, space that migrates, space that transforms. Extreme experiences challenge our perception of pain and pleasure, our notion of comfort and habitation, and the applied materials are thus challenged anew. The state of discomfort juxtaposed with the notion of comfort rouses our senses. Discomfort is an alert, vigilant state. Comfort is, on the other hand, a state where the body can rest from continually providing for and protecting itself and allow for reflection.

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NhEW Exhibition

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Being nomadic, the NhEW dwelling unit must adapt to different environments, taking on the extra layers required for protection and shedding others that restrain the inhabitant.

As the unit travels from place to place, new elements are adopted to customize shelter to the current context. In New York, NhEW can function as a rooftop dwelling, plugging into the building services below and taking advantage of a space that is typically unused. Urban characteristic accessories are utilized at Storefront for the city dweller.

NhEW is collaboration between OpenOffice, NY and cOPENhagenOFFICE/Tanja Jordan.

OPENOFFICE

www.open-office.net

Based in New York City, OPENOFFICE was founded as a platform for art and architecture projects. Four young architects from diverse backgrounds, Alan Koch, Lyn Rice, Galia Solomonoff and Linda Taalman are its current directors.

The name OPENOFFICE reflects our intention of an open design process exchange – OPENOFFICE architects collaborate with artists, innovators, and other experts on a project-by-project basis to perform in-depth experiments and execute projects that merge many disciplines. Our goal is to engage each project with an incisive dialog of architectural concerns, with special attention towards the resulting emergence of new programs. Each project's team is tailored to suit the needs of the project; additional members with specialized skills and knowledge are invited as required.

Projects range from museum, exhibition and set design to private houses and public art, from new materials and product development to new concepts in land use and urban planning. The overarching goal is to enhance the relationship of architecture with other disciplines and engage the public through innovation in program, building technology, and form. OPENOFFICE extends its practice globally through associations with other 'open-concept' practitioners, such as cOPENhagenOFFICE.

cOPENhagenOFFICE

www.copenhagenoffice.dk

Tanja Marie Jordan

Tanja Marie Jordan is a Copenhagen based architect with her own practise - cOPENhagenOFFICE since 1999. cOPENhagenOFFICE is an open-studio-platform generating collaborations between diverse professions with a focus on the dialogue between art and architecture.

cOPENhagenOFFICE recently won 1st prize in a small scale rooftop penthouse building competition, which at the moment is under development for a further built realisation. And exhibited at the censored Autumn Exhibition at Charlottenborg 2000 in Copenhagen with a 180 sq.m spatial installation. Jordan is also teaching 1st & 2nd year students at The Royal Danish Academy, School of Architecture in Copenhagen.

Tanja Jordan initiated and co-designed the NhEW House with Linda Taalman, OPENOFFICE, the prototype house was exhibited at the Danish Center for Architecture in Copenhagen in 1999 and was featured in the summer 2000 issue of Nest Magazine.

